The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor, analyzing in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1668 — WILLIAM GREEN, President — WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MARCH 30, 1943 — GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer — VOL. 33, NO. 13

FACING *the* FACTS
With PHILIP PEARL

We had the honor on March 28 of presenting to the American people via the nationally-broadcast Labor For Victory program the story of Mrs. Mary Ward, who heads the Women of Wake. Her story is at once pathetic and powerful—a perfect illustration of the spirit which makes the free workers of America unconquerable. We will let her tell it to you in her own words:

"I'm working hard to win this war, for I know that only in this way can I bring my husband back. You see, Leonard is a Japanese prisoner of war. At least, I hope he is, for I've had no word from him since the Japs captured Wake Island in December, 1941. Leonard's an operating engineer and he was assigned to Wake with other members of an A. F. of L. crew. He arrived there Armistice Day. On December seventh, my heart was heavy. My son, Jack, was at Pearl Harbor. He's a Navy radioman, and I knew instinctively that Wake would get it too. They did. The Japs bombed it that same afternoon.

"That first war Christmas was a lonely one for me, no word from Jack in Honolulu, none from my husband, and two days before Christmas the Japs took over Wake.

"I believe my husband is alive somewhere. My son Jack is now a radioman, first class, and he's here with me on his first leave in two years. He used to work in the studios; he's a member of the Screen Actors' Guild. He's a lucky boy for he's been in eight major battles. In the Battle of Midway his plane was lost at sea for five days, and for three days the men were without food or water. He was at Guadalcanal, too, but he doesn't like to talk about that. On one of his recent flights over Wake, Jack could see no signs of human beings there. Through information secured for us by the Red Cross, we believe that the civilians on Wake were taken to Japan.

Her Fighting Job

"While Jack's doing his fighting job I found mine too. I'm 42 years old and I work at Vega Aircraft operating a 300-pound hydraulic press, so I've become a member of Aeronautical Lodge No. 727, of the Machinists. I help build planes my son can fly, and if I build enough planes, Leonard will be free that much sooner.

"This war has really played havoc with our lives, and so we women whose husbands were on Wake have organized as the Women of Wake, to take care of our families until the men come home again. Now we're caring for 140 families including 92 children who need medical care. Through the Red Cross we've sent our men supplies and messages. We know they have reached them because the International Red Cross has said that letters and packages bearing the Red Cross symbol have gotten through.

"I'm only one woman, but I'm fighting for my husband and for my son. Until Leonard is free, the Red Cross is our only link of hope. We miss help the Red Cross now. We Women of Wake have been blood donors, most of us two of three times because the Red Cross will take our blood plasma to the Army and Navy. We know that Cross bandages will be there when our men are injured . . . nurses to care for our wounded men and Red Cross field directors to care for home and family problems the men can't take care of when their mind is on their fighting. The Red Cross stands for humanity.

"We A. F. of L. workers at Vega did our bit in contributing to the Lockheed-Vega 'Buck-of-the-Month Club' donation of $60,000 to the Red Cross, but yesterday my son and I made our own pledge to the Red Cross War Fund. That was our privilege, for we know that it takes every one of us giving double—working, fighting, sacrificing—united—to win."

An Inspiring Example

We feel every member of the American Federation of Labor will wish to join in expressing the admiration all of us feel for the spirit in which Mrs. Ward is carrying on the fight for victory. Just as those women are pitching in with all they've got, as she is doing. American workers cannot fall down on the job of making our country the arsenal of democracy when their wives are backing them up with the courage and devotion shown by Mrs. Ward.

Let us assure Mrs. Ward that the American Federation of Labor will not forget our friends and the other 1,200 AFL workers who were captured by the Japs at Wake and Guam. We will do everything humanly possible, through the Red Cross, to bring them relief and supplies so that they may be kept alive and in good health and so that they may return when the war is over to their homes and their families and the welcome which America will accord to its outstanding civilian heroes of the war.

At this moment members of the American Federation of Labor in cities all over the nation are contributing anywhere from a dollar to a day's pay to the Red Cross. These contributions from workers are helping to put the 125 million-dollar war fund of the American Red Cross over the top. It's got to go there and to make sure that it does, organized labor, through the medium of Labor For Victory broadcasts, announced that its Red Cross campaign will be extended through the month of April.

Therefore, in the name of the victims of this war, we appeal to all members of the American Federation of Labor to increase their donations to the Red Cross, to give in April as they gave in March, so that labor's name may lead all the rest on the rolls of those who helped their fellow men.

Labor For Victory Celebrates First Anniversary On The Air

Washington, D. C.—Labor For Victory will celebrate its first anniversary on the air with a special program on April 11.

Tributes to the value of this radio program in expediting the war production program and uplifting the morale of American workers will be presented by outstanding leaders of the nation's top war agencies.

The feature will be an address by Hon. Donald M. Nelson, President William Green on the progress of war production during the year Labor For Victory has been on the air.

Don't miss this broadcast! Tune in your local NBC station at 1:15 P. M., Eastern War Time, Sunday, April 11.

AFL and HOLC Block Loan "Grab"

Washington, D. C.—John H. Fahey, Federal Home Loan Bank Commissioner, charged at a Congressional hearing that pending legislation for the forced liquidation of the HOLC was inspired by private lending agencies and would cost the taxpayers "at least" $600 million dollars.

Under the proposed legislation the HOLC would be compelled to sell its best home loans to private lending agencies and get stuck with the bad ones.

These agencies would then be able to raise interest charges to thousands of workers' families who were enabled to save their homes in the depths of the depression through HOLC loans.

The legislative "grab," which was inserted as an amendment to the Independent Offices Appropriations Bill in the House of Representatives, came a cropper through labor's and Commissioner Fahey's joint opposition and it is believed the Senate will refuse to approve it.

New Labor-Management-Agriculture Policy Committee Set Up By WMC

Washington—On its own recommendation, the War Manpower Commission's Labor-Management Policy Committee of 17 members has been replaced with a new and more authoritative 9-man committee made up of three top-ranking leaders each from labor, management and agriculture.

This step was decided and announced at a conference of the organization leaders from the three groups, it was said, that the new committee would have more authority to speak for their groups.

The members of the new WMC Labor-Management-Agriculture Policy Committee are:

William Green, President, American Federation of Labor.
Philip Murray, President, Congress of Industrial Organizations.
A representative to be named by the Railroad Brotherhoods.
Eric Johnston, President, U. S. Chamber of Commerce.
Frederick Crawford, President, National Association of Manufacturers.
R. Conrad Cooper, Vice-President, Wheeling Steel Corporation.
E. A. O'Neal, President, American Farm Bureau Federation.
James Patton, President, National Farmers Union.
A. S. Goss, Master, National Grange.

Nelson Asks Labor And Industry To Help Him Draft WPB Policies

Washington, D. C.—Formation of a Management-Labor Council to meet periodically with Donald Nelson and other top officials of the War Production Board, to discuss WPB plans and policies as they affect organized industry and organized labor and in general to bring both groups more intimately and effectively into the war program, was announced by Chairman Donald M. Nelson.

The council will have 8 members, 4 of whom have been named by Mr. Nelson. They are:

William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor; Eric Johnston, president of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States; Philip Murray, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations; Fred Crawford, president of the National Association of Manufacturers.

Each of these men will select one additional member from his own organization to work with him in the meetings of the Council.

Mr. Nelson pointed out that in the past he has frequently consulted with all four of the members individually on matters in which management or labor had a special interest. While such discussions have been most useful, he said, he has felt for some time that their value could be greatly increased if the channel through which they are held were formally established and if the discussion could take the form of joint meetings with management and labor together.

"The plans and policies of the War Production Board have a constant impact on employer and employe," Mr. Nelson said. "Both should have, and through this Council will have, a better understanding of what the War Production Board is doing, and why. The impact of these actions on the economy of the country can well be handled by this representative group, and their advice can be obtained on any measures desirable in the national interest and helpful to make the War Production Board's scope of authority."

Medals For Labor's "Know-How"

Washington, D. C.—Labor's "know-how" was officially recognized by the War Production Board which announced that 57 workers in plants under the banner of the Army-Navy "E" have won Certificates of Merit awards for their ideas to raise war production.

Their suggestions, tested in their shops from coast to coast, and then channelled up to WPB headquarters from 3,000 plant committees consisting of AFL representatives and management officials, were judged the best from a pool of thousands of ideas considered by 12 nationally known experts.

As a result of the suggestion awards system functioning in over 2,000 plants where labor-management committees operate, "the ingenuity of nearly 4,500,000 workers . . . is being put to work," said the WPB.

Thousands of man-hours and many tons of critical materials are saved as a result of these workers' ideas, which are applied by all plants participating in the war production drive.

N. Y. Education Board Hit For Refusal To Name Starr Adult Education Chief

New York City.—Mayor La Guardia ordered a complete investigation of the Board of Education's refusal to appoint Max Starr, the only candidate to qualify, to the job of Adult Education Director.

Starr is education director of the International Ladies Garment Workers, AFL, although he is not a member of that union. He belongs to the American Federation of Teachers, AFL, with which many of the country's leading educators are affiliated.

Starr was given one of the top applicants for the appointment to pass a series of oral and written examinations and finished fifth, the highest a year.

The mayor told Commissioner of Investigation Herlands to find out why the board, by a 4-to-2 vote, turned down the unanimous choice of Starr by its own experts—the Board of Superintendents and the Board of Examiners.

La Guardia acted after receiving a protest from David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, telegraphed Ellsworth Buck, Board of Education president, calling the board's reasons for turning down Starr "contrary to the principles of democracy and our American way of life." He said:

"I urge that fitness, ability, qualifications and character be considered determining factors in the selection."

Wendell Willkie said:

"If Mr. Starr was rejected solely because he was employed by a union and believed in its principles, a basic American right has been violated. If there was ever a time when such prejudices should not be prevalent in American life it is now when we are fighting for freedom."

Despite general condemnation of the board's action, Buck made clear that he was standing pat on his position that Starr is unfitted for the post because he is a "labor protagonist."

Labor Victories Outnumber Defeats In Battles On State Legislation

Washington, D. C.—Organized labor scored several outstanding victories in its desperate battle on State legislative fronts against powerful reactionary interests seeking to destroy unions.

In six states—Washington, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Indiana and North Dakota—labor succeeded in killing all repressive bills, as the legislatures adjourned their 1942 sessions.

In North Dakota, the notorious "anti-violence" bill, promoted by Senator W. Lee O'Daniel and the Fascist "Christian Nationalist Crusade," which contained innumerable restrictions on labor, was tabled by a Senate committee. Union chiefs interpreted this defeat as a death knell for all pending anti-labor legislation in the state.

Major strikes for labor occurred in Arkansas and Kansas. In the former state Governor Homer Adkins signed the O'Daniel "anti-violence" bill, while in Kansas Governor Andrew Schoeppel approved legislation placing on unions the burden of filing a mass of detailed reports on finances, dues, salaries of officers and other data; compelling union representatives to be licensed, and placing extreme restrictions on strikes and picketing.

In both states leaders of all branches of labor charged the laws invaded the constitutional rights of citizens and that court tests would be instituted.

Another defeat for labor was sustained in South Dakota, where the legislature adopted a bill curbing picketing at agricultural establishments. In Texas, reactionary solons appeared to be trying to capture national championship in the field of anti-labor laws. Three in a row were railroaded through a Senate committee.

In Oklahoma, inauguration of an organizing campaign by the American Federation of Teachers was followed by the introduction of a bill in the legislature aimed at preventing teachers from joining unions. The bill was defeated.

COLORADO LEGISLATURE VOTES UNION CONTROL

Denver, Colo.—Both branches of the Colorado Legislature approved a bill calling for stricter state supervision over labor unions. The measure would require labor unions to incorporate and submit regular financial reports to the state government.

The sitdown strike and secondary boycott are classified as unfair labor practices. Another provision prohibits union initiation fees for temporary workers.

Secretary James A. Brownell of the State Federation of Labor, said the bill is a "declaration of war on labor" and that its constitutionality will be tested.

Green's Public Challenge To Murray Results In New AFL-CIO Meeting To Seek Pact Against Union Raids

President Green's Statement

Washington, D. C.—Following are excerpts from AFL President William Green's testimony before the Truman (Senate) Committee investigating the nation's war effort:

America is fulfilling its pledge of becoming the arsenal of democracy. In a year's time the nation has quadrupled production of the vital weapons of war. Even more encouraging is the fact that the production rate is still increasing. The next year should produce production this year until we reach the staggering totals required for the successful prosecution of the war.

The American Federation of Labor is proud of the record of its members in helping to make these achievements possible. But we are not satisfied to stand on our past records. We want to keep making new records and to keep breaking new records because we know that is the way we can hasten the day of victory.

How can we further increase production? I assume that is the question this committee is chiefly interested in. It is also the paramount concern of organized labor.

Until now we have sought to increase production by the obvious methods of increasing plant capacity, expanding the supply of materials and recruiting more and more millions of workers. This was the quick way and speed was our first consideration. But now we are approaching the limits of plant capacity, of materials supply and of manpower. Now we must try to see how we can produce more with what we've got on hand.

Unquestionably, during the first stages of the war production program, with the accent on speed, America was wasteful, extravagant and even profligate with its resources. Now the time has come for tightening up all along the line—for long-range scheduling of production and materials, for eliminating labor hoarding, for more business-like and efficient supervision. By such means, bottlenecks can be avoided and total output increased.

We must also take full advantage of our hitherto undeveloped resources. Chief of these, in my opinion, is the "know-how," the technical experience and the eagerness of American workers to do their part better and do it quicker. We have heard much in recent months of the "know-how" of American industry and how it has helped expand production. I join in admiration and respect. But it seems to me that industry as a whole has been gravely remiss in failing to enlist the "know-how" of the man at the machine to solve production problems. Wherever management has encouraged workers to get together with their supervisors, the results have been remarkable. There are hundreds of instances. Let me cite a typical case.

An Outstanding Example

At the A. O. Smith Corporation plant at Milwaukee, where 8,000 American Federation of Labor members are at work on armor plate, a labor-management committee was set up last March. The committee assigned 325 men to consult all workers in their spare time on production facts. Things began to happen. One production line was getting out 35 bombs per hour. With the improvements suggested by the workers the production pace was doubled in a few months, with 70 bombs completed every hour.

This is the kind of cooperation that is vitally needed in every war production plant in the nation. In my opinion, any firm which fails to set up a labor-management committee in its plants is failing to do its full duty to itself and to America.

Through such committees many manpower and production problems can be solved. Workers may arise in each plant without dragging the issues to Washington. Take absenteeism, for instance. Labor-management committees have done a remarkable job in reducing absenteeism wherever they have been established. Let me tell you how. The committee investigates each absence to determine its causes. If the worker involved was injured in an accident, the committee recommends safety measures. If transfers in finding and providing better living quarters. If the individual worker had no good excuse for being absent, the committee lets him know that he will not enjoy that right in the future. If the work sequence is planned badly, thus forcing absenteeism, the committee sees to it that the various processes of production are dovetailed more closely. And so on, right down the list. The important thing is that in all these and many other ways production can be stepped up by enlisting labor's active participation.

I wish to recommend two additional measures by which the output of war materials can be increased. First is the application throughout industry of the 48-hour week. This will help to avoid manpower shortages. Secondly, I believe greater use should be made of three shifts in small plants and in large cities where there is a surplus supply of manpower and machinery. Proper distribution of contracts will help tremendously in getting them completed on time.

Wages And Inflation

The wages of American workers cannot be undermined without weakening their power to produce. This is what is happening today. The lack of an integrated war economy and the haphazard operation of our price control system have had the effect of shackling wage earners hand and foot. The cost of living has soared beyond control. Workers and their families are unable to obtain higher pay are blocked by rigid wage ceilings established by the National War Labor Board.

The American Federation of Labor fully endorsed and supported the stabilization program promulgated by President Roosevelt to keep the cost of living within bounds. As part of that program we accepted wage stabilization. We assumed that prices of necessities of life would likewise be firmly controlled. But we find that prices won't behave. They are running away. The official statistics tell us that the cost of living rose 15 per cent in the 12 months. Workers and their families know better. When they go to the neighborhood stores they can't buy what they need because the prices of meat, fish and vegetables have in many instances gone up as much as 100 per cent.

Organized labor asks now what it was promised—stabilization. We insist that prices be brought back within reasonable limits and kept there. We ask that wages be brought ahead of actual living costs. We urge that the National War Labor Board revise its wage control formulas to permit sufficient flexibility so that just decisions may be rendered in accordance with the facts and the evidence in each case presented to it.

Lund Advocates Labor-Management Cooperation To Reduce Absenteeism

Washington, D. C.—"Absenteeism can be sharply reduced by labor-management joint action if causes are carefully analyzed and dealt with intelligently," declared Wendell Lund, Director, WPB Labor Production Division, in testifying before the Labor Committee of the House of Representatives.

"The first and greatest cause of absenteeism is illness," he said. "The severe winter just passed brought on a considerable illness in many regions unduly forcing up the rate of absenteeism. More is caused by overcrowding in industrial communities, transportation which interested this proper safeguarding of housing and sanitation standards. Inadequate transportation with breakdowns in it had weather aggravate colds and the illnesses which develop from them.

"Accidents at work are a runner-up to sickness as a cause of absenteeism. They are often a result of fatigue a too rapid plant expansion, the large scale introduction of new and inexperienced workers, an insufficient number of supervisors, many of whom are also less experienced, overcrowding of plants and speeding-up processes. A contributing factor is inadequate enforcement of state safety laws due to the increased load put on enforcement officials resulting from the expansion of industrial activity.

"Fatigue bulks large in both illness and accident cases. The longer the workweek, the lower the individual's resistance, and the slower his reaction to danger. Studies made over a period of years in the case of plurality; you can't outlaw bus breakdowns and road washouts.

"Let us urge cooperation of management, workers, and community in finding and solving the causes of absenteeism. Let us put no hindering legislation in their way, or arouse no public opinion against them on false grounds; lest we interfere with that great production effort which we all seek to advance."

Committee Meets To Draft Plan To Maintain Status Quo For Duration

Washington, D. C.—President William Green dramatically challenged Philip Murray before a public hearing of the Senate Truman Committee to sign an agreement on the spot banishing union "raiding" for the duration.

The CIO leader evaded the issue but finally agreed to submit the matter to a meeting of the AFL-CIO Peace Committee, which was called at once. As this edition went to press, the committee was considering what action it could take.

Mr. Green's challenge came at the climax of his testimony before the Truman Committee which is investigating the conduct of the war effort.

After giving the committee specific recommendations for increasing production and for controlling inflation, Mr. Green launched into a bitter attack on the jurisdictional raids now being carried on by CIO unions against AFL organizations in the Kaiser shipyards on the Pacific Coast and in two-dozen additional war plants.

"Such raiding constitutes a serious menace to the war production program and prompt action must be taken to halt it," Mr. Green said.

"The American Federation of Labor has proposed an agreement with the CIO to outlaw such raids," he continued. "This agreement would provide that where a union is established as the collective bargaining agency for the workers in a plant and has entered into contracts with the management, the status of this union—whether it be AFL or CIO—should not be challenged by raids of a rival union for the duration."

At the conclusion of Mr. Green's testimony, members of the Senate Committee questioned Mr. Murray about his attitude toward such a proposal without obtaining a definite commitment. It was then that Mr. Green stepped forward and asked for an immediate response.

The AFL President told the committee:

"Failing the successful negotiation of such a voluntary agreement, the American Federation of Labor urges that the Government take direct action to prevent a possible breakdown in production due to union raiding. The National Labor Relations Board must be given explicit power to keep its hands off inter-union disputes for the duration. If this is done and the National Labor Relations Board is required to stop aiding and abetting union raids, I do not hesitate to predict that there will be no more jurisdictional disputes to threaten the war production program."

In his earlier testimony, Mr. Green warmly endorsed the recommendation of the Truman Committee for centralized direction of the entire war effort. He reminded the committee that the last AFL convention had recommended such a program under the administration of an over-all Board of Military and Civilian Strategy.

Mr. Green praised the nation's productive accomplishments to date and suggested that with long-range planning of output and materials much of the wasted effort and confused distribution of material which have marked the war production program can be eliminated in the future.

He strongly urged that war industries utilize the greater advantage the "know-how" of American workers through the wider establishment of labor-management committees. Such committees can help speed up production, solve operational problems and deal with manpower questions such as absenteeism, he declared.

As further steps to jack up production, Mr. Green advocated universal application of the 48-hour week and the allocation of a larger proportion of war contracts to small towns and large cities which now have a surplus supply of manpower and idle machinery on hand.

Mr. Green vigorously attacked the rigidity of the "Little Steel" wage formula and warned that it is resulting in grave injustice to workers who find their income frozen while prices of food are "running away." He criticized official statistics as giving an entirely false picture of what is happening to the cost of living, remarking that workers "can't eat" statistics. Unless the cost of food and other basic commodities is brought down and kept down by strict controls, wage adjustments will have to be made throughout the country, he warned.

UNDERGROUND DRIVE TO FIGHT MUSSOLINI REGIME

Washington, D. C.—A new phase of the civil disobedience campaign against Mussolini's fascist regime, about to begin in Italy, according to information just received via London, through the OWI, by Vanni B. Montana, secretary of the Italian Socialist Federation in America. The campaign was initiated last fall inside Italy by the underground Italian Socialist Party and associated labor groups whose program is not only to overthrow Fascism, but also to save Italy from passing from the present dictatorship to another.

The civil disobedience move against Mussolini's regime will be launched under the new slogan: "The War Is Lost, But Italy Can Still Save Itself."